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IN PRAISE OF FRIENDSHIP.

Few things are more common in this world, happily, than friendliness; but Friendship in its highest sense is a rarity. It is even more rare than what we call love. Love, as commonly understood, occurs at least once in the majority of lifetimes; but a true friendship hardly comes to one in a hundred persons. It includes the best part of love, without the evanescence that sometimes accompanies the stronger passion. He is a fortunate man who finds a friend. Emerson says that 'when a man becomes dear to me, I have touched the goal of fortune.' He is right. Higher than this one cannot easily go. And again, Emerson says that true love 'cannot be unrequited.' Again he is right. A true love is its own requital. It may bring trouble, affliction—its very root is a sort of divine discontent; but it brings with it life's truest gold. No one has truly lived till he has loved.

It is usually supposed that in friendship there must be an equality—that one must not be giving more than he receives. Possibly such might be the case in an ideal communion; but it is very seldom the case upon this earth. In most friendships, one is the more active, the other more passive; one offers, and the other takes; one glows, and the other receives his light. The bond between them need be none the less sacred and binding, none the less beautiful. The heart that gives most loses nothing by its giving, but gains. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, then he who receives gives a blessing by receiving. Not only so, but there are different kinds of giving. The man who is willing to receive my affection, my sympathy, and such tenderness as it lies in me to offer him, is conferring upon me a priceless benefit. I feel that I owe him more than life can ever repay. If he will allow me to do and to suffer for his sake, it is I who am indebted, and not he. How can I ever repay him for having accepted what I offered?

Can the devotion of a lifetime in any way requite? My friend is never more my friend than when he is receiving and I am giving.

Perhaps that is not the light in which this matter is usually regarded. Such practice might not do for cases of mere acquaintanceship and society. The laws of social etiquette demand that an equivalent be given for everything. But the laws of spiritual love know that no equivalent *can* be given, consciously, for anything. The effort to make a return is an outrage on friendship's finest essence. Current coin goes for nothing here. There is no such thing as giving value for value. What is received is priceless, what is given is priceless; it cannot be figured and ticketed. The obligation on both sides is greater than can be acknowledged; neither can write out a receipt and cry quits. There is no nobler tie between heart and heart than this mutual debt, which neither can feel as an obligation, because it is a part of the soul's very life.

It is generally supposed that one friend may counsel and advise another, may point out his faults and urge their removal. A friendly adviser, a kindly-disposed companion, may do this; but hardly a friend. To do so would imperil the very ground on which friendship is based. I may know, theoretically, that my friend has faults; as a question of intellectual discernment, I may see that he has shortcomings. I may even suffer from them myself. But what does that matter? I love him entirely, and dare not speak of his fault. Who am I, that I should look for the moles in my brother's eye? My very doing so would prove that there is a beam in my own. If he pains me with a hasty word, it is enough, or perhaps too much, that I look grieved; I will not utter a word of complaint. The silences of friendship say more than the words. I can talk commonplaces, I can scold or praise or condole, with any casual acquaintance; with my friend, I know how to keep silent, and need no utterance.

Some persons tell us that we should choose our friends as we choose the books that we read. Such a choice is impossible. We may choose our companions; we cannot choose our friends. No law of conscious selection can be exercised. The word 'affinity' has been misused and contaminated; but affinity is the vital principle of friendship. I do not love my friend because I choose to love him; I love him because I cannot help myself. He has drawn me towards him as a magnet draws the needle. I can resist and keep away, if I choose; but I do so only by intense effort of the will. The will is weaker than the instinct, unless trained and under mastery of the soul's highest powers. Pride is the strongest force that can keep me from my friend's side—pride and jealousy. From jealousy I may do wrong to my affection; I may absent myself, or seem cold and careless; but the pang within is one of the keenest that a heart can suffer. It is better to annihilate pride, to banish jealousy, to crush *self*; to reach life's summits by laying myself low.

The feeling of gratitude is sometimes considered to be an important element of friendship. But gratitude of itself can hardly produce natural love. There is a sense in which we should love all men; but we can never love all men with the love of an overpowering friendship, nor can a sense of kindness received cause us to feel so towards one in particular. Universal love is something superhuman; the love which we are speaking of as friendship is peculiar to the 'natural man.' It is rooted firmly on present things, and could be happy enough on this earth, without thinking of the future, if the company of the loved one could be assured. Shall we call it 'profane' love, because such is its feeling? The wonderful love of Jonathan for David is recorded in Scripture without condemnation; yet undoubtedly Jonathan's love was such as this. Thoreau is right in thinking that such love occurs more frequently between persons of the same sex, than between man and woman. For the sexual love, which is a law of nature, is totally different from, and inferior to, this love, unless it is supplemented by the higher. One curse of society is the fact that it so seldom is thus supplemented.

If I find my friend to be unworthy, does it diminish or kill my love? Hardly.

Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds.

I cannot change because my friend has changed, or because my knowledge of him has changed. He may become less of a friend to me; I cannot become less of a friend to him. Inconstancy or fickleness is possible in that connection which looks for a return; but true love expects nothing in exchange for what it

gives, and thereby is enriched immeasurably. It looks for no barter of courtesies and civilities; such things belong to a lower level. If I could not love always, having once loved, I could not feel sure of the immortality of my soul. What is there that can endure, if love cannot? If I go to my own heart, and find its love is transient and inconstant, then indeed I may say all is vanity, and there is no good under the sun. To discover this must lead to atheism and despair.

THE LAWYER'S SECRET.*

CHAPTER IV.—AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

LADY BOLDON had told her maid to call her at seven o'clock on the following morning, saying that she wished to be in time for an early service in church at eight, and that she would breakfast and spend the day at the Rectory. Nobody was surprised, therefore, to see her leaving the Chase alone and on foot next morning about half-past seven, clad in a simple walking costume. Instead of going to the church, however, she turned down a field-path that led to the railway station. The up-train was not due, and she took care to wait, not on the platform, but in the ladies' waiting-room, so that she might at all events diminish the chance of her husband hearing that she had taken a clandestine trip to town.

The train came up; and the half-dozen passengers took their seats, Lady Boldon securing an empty compartment. After the next station the train became a fast one, stopping only twice on the journey to London. There would be plenty of time, Lady Boldon thought, for all she wanted to do.

At the first stoppage, Lady Boldon procured a newspaper, and tried her best to read it. She was not going to allow herself to become excited by thinking perpetually of that one theme. She knew she would want all her wits in the coming interview. The train dashed on its way; and the solitary traveller plodded through the long dull speeches of a debate in Parliament, steadily performing the task she had set herself. At length she came to something in the newspaper that interested her. She was leaning back in her corner, reading, with the paper held up before her face, when the train slackened its speed, and finally stopped. Lady Boldon hardly noticed the fact, and did not change her attitude. The door of the carriage opened; some one got in, closed the door behind him, and sat down opposite her. She finished the report she had been reading, and laid down the paper. 'Hugh!' The word rushed unbidden to her lips. Then she sat, trembling from head to foot, unable to utter a word, gazing at her

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discarded lover's face. It was very pale and stern. For the moment he, too, hardly knew how to speak, or what to say. He was the first to recover himself. Politely raising his hat, he said—'I did not know you were in the carriage, Lady Boldon, or I would not have intruded on you.'

'Won't you shake hands?' she said, holding out her daintily gloved little hand.

He just touched it, and looked out of window, as if in hope that some other passengers would come into the carriage. No one did, however. Most of the business men had gone up to town by earlier trains, and those who were left preferred the smoking compartments. But Lady Boldon was determined to break down her old lover's pride and resentment. He had sent her no wedding present, no message, as she well remembered; and she had been glad of it. But she could not bear to see that hard, cold look on his face. It cut her to the heart.

'How do you come to be in the country?' she asked in a natural, matter-of-fact manner, speaking just as if nothing had happened to part them.

'I live here,' he returned; 'I am on my way to the Temple. We are only fifteen miles from London.'

'Oh, I did not know we were so near. But I am so glad to have met you. I seldom see any one that can give me any news of you. How is your work getting on? Any briefs coming in?'

Hugh Thesiger was tempted to reply by saying that the details of his life could not possibly interest Lady Boldon; and his old sweetheart saw plainly in his face that something of the kind was passing in his mind; but he said simply: 'I have no reason to complain, thank you,' and began to unfold his newspaper.

Lady Boldon's eyes flashed. Love and pride struggled together in her breast. Love conquered. Putting her hand on the offending newspaper, she gently pushed it away, and smiled in her companion's face.

'Are you angry with me, Hugh? Now, don't say "No." I know you are. And I think, perhaps, you have a right to be. I made you no promise; yet you might think that, after all our years of friendship, you had a right to have one. I acted for the best, Hugh, believe me. It would never have done for me to be a drag upon you all your life—never. It would have broken my heart to see you crushed out of the society of your equals, tortured by anxiety.—I tell you, Hugh, *you don't know what poverty is*. I do. I have saved you from it in spite of yourself; and one day, perhaps, you will thank me. Poverty kills love, Hugh. It drains a man's spirit—drains it of courage and energy, and the power to do justice to himself, as a vampire might drain his heart's blood. It makes a man weary of his life. You are strong and brave; but poverty, that is, *real*

poverty—not knowing how to pay your taxes or to get the very necessities of life, I mean—that would have crushed strength and bravery, ay, and hope itself, out of your soul!'

Hugh made no answer in words; he merely shook his head.

In putting down the newspaper, Lady Boldon's hand had accidentally touched Hugh's. A thrill that had in it as much pain as pleasure trembled in every nerve of his body, and he shrank from the contact as if it burned him. The lady noticed that, as she noticed everything; but no one would have thought that she had seen the involuntary shrinking from her touch. As she continued speaking, he held down his head, as if reading the outside sheet of the newspaper. Lower and lower his head sank; the tones of that well-remembered voice, which had for him been silent so long, almost unmanned him. By an effort he mastered himself, and lifting himself up met Lady Boldon eye to eye.

'You made your choice; and now—what do you want with me?'

That was what his look said; and Lady Boldon answered his look.

'I want you to let me be your friend,' she said softly. 'Let us be friends, as we used to be in the old time.'

'No!' he said sharply. 'That cannot be. You know it cannot be.'

A great joy, a great wave of pleasure, surged up in the woman's heart as these words fell on her ear. It was not pride, she knew, that made him answer her so—it was love! He loved her still. In spite of all, she held her old place in his heart! She was forced to cover her face with her hands, to conceal her feeling. When she looked up, Thesiger had turned aside, and was gazing out of one of the windows.

'We shall not often meet, Hugh,' she said gently; 'so we need not discuss it. But I will not believe that you could ever be really hard or unkind to me. Never mind. Let us talk about yourself. Are you still as ambitious as ever?'

'I'm afraid I am—and with as little prospect as ever of making a name for myself. If I were rich'—He stopped short.

'If you were rich?'

'I would try to make friends, and get into Parliament. But it is difficult for a poor and unknown man to form influential connections.'

Again Lady Boldon's eyes flashed fire; and, unseen by her companion, she clenched her hands and set her teeth. Sir Richard should not revoke that will!

'Now, I want you to take care of me for an hour,' said Lady Boldon, as the train drew near to London. 'I have an engagement at twelve; and you see I have more than an hour to spare.'

Hugh hesitated.

'Don't say that you have an important case coming on in court, for I shall not believe you. Surely you can spare me a poor half-hour?'

'The whole day, as far as I am concerned; but—forgive me, Lady Boldon—we must think of what the world would say in these things.'

'Oh yes, I see—Mrs Grundy!'

It was on the tip of his tongue to tell her that Mrs Grundy was in the right nine times out of ten, but he only laughed, and said—'Don't quarrel with Mrs Grundy, Lady Boldon; it doesn't pay. But this is an emergency. Suppose we look in at one of the picture-galleries to kill the time?'

'That will be the very thing.'

If Adelaide Boldon had been any other woman, Hugh would have thought that she was straining the privileges of her sex. But her wilful, impetuous manner so vividly reminded him of the past, that he could not find it in his heart to judge her harshly.

They went to a picture-gallery in Bond Street, Hugh feeling all the time a strange mingling of pleasure and discomfort, Lady Boldon apparently quite at her ease and happy. Once or twice Thesiger could almost have pinched himself, to make sure that he was not dreaming. Could it be possible that this was the Adelaide whom he had loved, and whom he had mourned as one dead to him—that this was Adelaide herself, walking, smiling, chatting at his side?

'Can I take you anywhere?' he asked, when the hour had expired.

'If you wouldn't mind seeing me as far as Chancery Lane,' she said, not daring to tell him more.

He got a cab; and they drove together to Fleet Street.

'Now, I must say good-bye, and thank you ever so much for your kindness,' said Lady Boldon, as Hugh helped her to alight.

'When are we to meet again?' he asked, holding her hand for a moment.

'When you come to call at Roby Chase.—You will come, won't you? Promise me that you will.'

Before he had time to answer, Lady Boldon's face changed. She had caught sight of Mr Felix, who was coming straight towards them. Hugh could not help noticing the alteration in her manner, and her subdued agitation, as she said—'This is a gentleman I wish to see; I must speak to him.—Come and see me the first time you are at Chalfont. Do.—Good-bye.'

Mr Felix, looking up, saw them together, and stopped short. He shot a quick, inquiring glance at Thesiger, for he had noticed that the two seemed to be on intimate terms with each other; and a painful sting of jealousy darted through his heart.

'How d'ye do, Mr Felix? It is so lucky that I have met you,' said Lady Boldon. 'I might have had some difficulty in finding your office; and now you can be my pilot yourself.' She spoke with kindness, but with an air of authority, as if it were her place to signify her wish, the solicitor's place to obey her. And he obeyed her without question. Trembling with apprehension, yet with a strange delight, he offered Lady Boldon his arm—for the street was crowded—and led her, first up Chancery Lane, and then down a small street to the right—Norfolk Street.

'How is Sir Richard?' he inquired.

'Much better, or I should not be here,' she replied calmly.

Entering a house which contained several suites of offices, Mr Felix took his visitor up to the second floor, and there she saw the lawyer's name in dingy paint on a door. Lady Boldon was surprised. She had expected to see a handsome building, and large, well-furnished rooms, filled with polite young gentlemen in training for the law. Instead, she saw only one dirty room half-filled by a great cupboard for holding papers, and a huge, old-fashioned mahogany double desk. Two clerks, perched on high stools, were seated at the desk—one, an elderly man, with a thin, pinched, mean-looking face, as yellow as the parchment at which he was labouring. This man's name was Matthew Fane. The other clerk was much younger, not much over twenty. Fane descended from his stool as his master entered the office, and obsequiously opened for him the door of his private room—first, an ordinary door, and then an inner one without a lock, covered with green baize.

'Not to be disturbed, Matthew,' said the lawyer to his subordinate, as he followed Lady Boldon into the inner room.

Matthew Fane went back to his stool.

'Dan,' he said, after a minute's silence, 'I think you'd better try again to serve that writ on Randolph & Bigge as you go to dinner. You can be off now.'

The junior clerk directed a queer look at his senior, when the other's eyes were not upon him. But he kept his thoughts, whatever they were, to himself. He left his seat, changed his coat, selected one paper from a small heap of documents that lay beneath a leaden weight on his desk, and left the office.

No sooner had the door closed behind him, than Matthew Fane slipped from his stool, stole softly to the door of the inner room, and, with the utmost care and gentleness, opened it. The lock was well oiled, and he accomplished the feat of opening the door without making the slightest sound. He then took his pen from behind his ear, and passing it through the opening, pressed gently but steadily on the green-baize door within. It yielded, as he knew it would. Mr Felix's chair was so placed that the door was not visible from it; and it was very unlikely that any stranger would notice that the door was open about a quarter of an inch. If Mr Felix moved in his seat, there was plenty of time to close the outer of the two doors and retreat, as Mr Fane knew from experience.

As soon as the green-baize door yielded, Matthew bent eagerly down to listen, for the clear ringing tones of the lady's voice fell upon his ear.

CHAPTER V.—WHAT MATTHEW FANE OVERHEARD.

'If you were in my place, Mr Felix,' Lady Boldon was saying—'If you were about to be made the victim of so gross an injustice, you would feel about it as I do. But first of all, I want to know—What was in that telegram?'

'The telegram was nothing, I assure you,' answered the lawyer. 'It merely urged me to bring the new will to Roby for signature the

moment it should be ready. There it is, if you care to see it.'

'Sir Richard's purpose remains unchanged, then?'

'Not exactly. I had a letter from him this morning.'

'Ah, yes! Does that alter the situation?'

'In a way, it does.'

'In what way?'

Mr Felix hesitated. 'It makes an alteration in the new will,' he said, after a moment's reflection.

'Well; and what is the new idea?' said the lady haughtily. She had already learned that the more cavalierly she treated this man, the more flexible he became.

He took a letter from a basket which lay on the table, and sat with it in his hand for some seconds without speaking. 'Lady Boldon,' he said at length, 'I have made up my mind to trust you. All I beg of you is to remember that I am placing my reputation in your hands.'

The only reply to this was a haughty bow. The lady did not even trouble to look at the attorney; her eyes were fixed on the letter which he was holding out to her. She took it; and the eavesdropper at the door had no need to speculate upon its purport.

'So long as she remains my widow!'

In her excitement Lady Boldon had sprung to her feet. She positively blazed with passion. 'I understand!' she cried; 'I am to be a breathing monument of my lord's generosity! Just as one puts one's servants in mourning, he would put his wife into mourning—but hers, poor woman, is to be life-long!—No, sir; to this I will *not* submit!' She absolutely tore the sheet of paper in two, and flung it on the ground.

Mr Felix had been tempted to smile at this passionate outburst; but by the time Lady Boldon had said her last words, she had in a sense mastered him. He was intoxicated by her beauty, carried away by her indignation. The temptation which had been present to his mind for days, and which he had never firmly put away from him—that he might, by serving Lady Boldon at this juncture, by sacrificing his honour and incurring some risk for her sake, gain a hold over her which she might not be able to shake off, returned now with tenfold strength. His heart beat tumultuously, his whole body trembled at the thought of the danger he might incur, and the reward that might be his if he succeeded. And when Lady Boldon's mood changed—when, after a minute or two of silence, she lifted her beautiful eyes—eyes that were 'just about to have a tear'—to his face, and said quietly, almost gently, 'Will you not help me?' he found himself for the moment unable to speak.

He rose and paced the room for a minute or two without answering. Two things were present to his mind, when his agitation had abated. In the first place, it might be impossible, probably would be impossible, to frustrate Sir Richard Boldon's intention without actually suppressing a will. But, supposing he were willing to do that, it would never do to yield at once. He must, from the very beginning, impress upon Lady Boldon the im-

mense difficulty, and the positive danger, attending the task she had set him. He must make her understand that, whatever he undertook, she was his partner; and that, if he became guilty, she would share his guilt. And she must also be made to understand that his services could not be had, either now or later, without payment.

'I don't see what we can do, Lady Poldon,' he said, resuming his seat. 'It is all very well to say that you will not submit to the injustice—and I quite admit that it seems to me a very great injustice—but what can be done to prevent it?'

'You can delay—make difficulties about preparing the will.'

'True; but we could only gain a short respite in that way.'

'You might decline to act for him.—No; I see that would not do. He would only apply to some other solicitor.'

'Exactly.'

'But surely you can help me, Mr Felix? You are a man. You are a lawyer. You know what can be done, and what is impracticable. Can't you think of *some* way of preventing Sir Richard from defrauding me? It is nothing less than defrauding me; for he promised before the marriage that the estate should be mine in case I survived him. Can you think of no way of hindering him from leaving it to another?'

Lady Boldon was only expressing the belief, which is shared by many women and not a few men, that lawyers can find paths—not always very clean paths perhaps, but safe and respectable ones—by which ends that would be unattainable to ordinary mortals may be reached.

'I am afraid,' said the lawyer slowly, 'that it is beyond my power to prevent the will being signed.'

'Then you cannot help me at all? You would rather see this injustice done, than go out of your way to prevent it?'

'Do not say that, Lady Boldon. You must know that your interests have the first place with me always.'

'And yet you refuse to help me!'

'Pardon me; I did not say that.'

'Or say you can't help me—it comes to the same thing.'

'I—I did not say that either. Opportunities sometimes occur for attaining legitimate ends by what I may call irregular means.'

This was just what had been in Lady Boldon's own mind all along; but put into words it sounded dreadfully vague and hollow.

'Do you mean that you think you will be able to secure the estate for me, one way or another?'

'My dear Lady Boldon, how can I possibly say that? All I can say is, that no efforts of mine shall be wanting to further your views.'

The lady noticed and resented the 'Dear Lady Boldon'; but she could not afford to check this familiarity for the present. She gave a little nervous laugh. 'I almost think you are amusing yourself at my expense, Mr Felix. First you say you are devoted to my interests; and when I ask you *what* you will do to help me, you evade the question with some neat speech.'

Again Mr Felix looked keenly at his visitor. Could she mean that she wished him to say that he was ready to perpetrate a gigantic fraud at her mere bidding, without so much as a hint at recompense?

'It is no laughing matter for—for either of us,' said the solicitor gravely.

Lady Boldon glanced at him uneasily, expecting him to go on. But he could not go on. He wanted to say that if he did this thing, he should expect to be paid for it; and that his price would be a high one; but he could not as yet put his ideas into words.

'I'm afraid I hardly understand,' said Lady Boldon.

'Then it is better that we *should* understand one another. In doing a thing of this kind, there is always a certain risk'—

At this point, the pen with which Matthew Fane was holding the green-baize door ajar slipped, gliding with an audible sound over the rough surface of the cloth; and the door closed. Fane was for the moment paralysed with fright; his knees literally trembled under him. What if the sound had been heard! He would have rushed off to his desk, but that he had at that moment no power to move. It was all he could do to maintain his grasp of the door-handle, and prevent himself from noisily shutting the outer of the two doors in his fright.

But one second after another went by, and nothing happened. As a matter of fact, both the lawyer and the lady were too much engrossed by their own thoughts to hear the sound made by Matthew's pen as it slipped over the cloth. Presently the old clerk recovered from his fright, and gently pushed the inner door open once more. Lady Boldon was speaking, this time in a slow, troubled way, as if puzzling over something she did not quite understand.

'The will must be signed?' she asked.

'Undoubtedly. Until that is done, Sir Richard's mind will not be at rest; and if we thwart him, he will go off to some other solicitor.—And I fear that would settle your fate, Lady Boldon,' he added with a smile.

Again the lady noticed and resented the familiarity of the lawyer's manner. Again she felt powerless to protect herself from it.

'No; that wouldn't do at all,' she said quickly. 'But if the will is once signed, it is all over, is it not? How can you possibly prevent my husband's will from taking effect after it is signed?'

'I think, perhaps, you had better leave that in my hands,' was the answer.

In spite of himself, the lawyer's voice trembled as he said this. It was the first thing he had said that amounted to a promise to play the part of—well, a scoundrel.

Lady Boldon made no answer. Another woman might have reflected that it was just as well that she should know nothing of the lawyer's schemes. But Lady Boldon was not the sort of woman to console herself with the thought that the risk would fall on another. She did not even see clearly that there must be a risk, because she did not fully comprehend that her object could not, in all probability, be carried out without the committing of a crime.

She was just then thinking that if her husband once signed the new will, she would be entirely dependent on Mr Felix for getting the effect of it set aside, and that she had no means of binding him to be faithful to her interests.

'The chief thing we must guard against,' continued the lawyer, after a short pause, 'is allowing Sir Richard to communicate his intention to any one. Fortunately, he is not a talkative man; and I happen to know that he is not on very good terms with his heir-at-law—at least it was so twelve months ago. Do you know whether your husband has told anybody that he has been thinking of making a fresh disposition of his property?'

'I believe he has told the curate—in fact, I told him myself,' said Lady Boldon.

'Ah! The curate? What is his name?'

'Mr Lynd. He tried to make Sir Richard change his mind, but without the least success.'

For a minute or two Mr Felix seemed to be in a brown-study. 'I must go down to Roby to-morrow, to get the new will executed,' he said, after a long pause.

'And even if it is signed, you think there is still some ground for hope?'

'Yes; even then, I think, we need not despair.'

She meant it innocently: that is to say, in her intense desire that the thing should be done, she would not stop to consider how impossible it was that it could be done by legitimate means. She did not know that she was allowing her covetousness to lead her blindfold to the verge of crime. Mr Felix, however, did not deceive himself in any way. He chose words which had a harmless signification—they might have referred to a possible revocation of the new will by Sir Richard himself—on purpose that Lady Boldon's susceptibilities might not be shocked. But he had intended her to understand, and he believed that she did understand, that he might perhaps consent to suppress the will in her interest.

At this point in the conversation Matthew Fane heard a quick step in the passage outside. In an instant he let the green-baize door, which closed with a spring, fall into its place; and quickly, yet without the least noise, he shut the outer of the two doors. But before he could regain his desk, his fellow-clerk entered the office.

This young man was named Daniel O'Leary. He was Matthew Fane's nephew. He was a thorough Londoner, densely ignorant of everything that lay outside the sphere of his own observation, but perfectly acquainted with all that lay within it, and sharp as a needle when his own interests were concerned. His clothes were cheap, of course, but cut according to the prevailing mode. His hair was red, his features insignificant, his eyes small and keen. He took his seat in silence, and regarded his uncle for some seconds without saying a word.

'What's up since I've been away, uncle?' he asked quietly.

'What's up? Nothin's up. What should be up, I should like to know?' retorted the old man angrily.

The young man pondered a few moments,

slowly shaking his head. 'You've been lis'enin' at the door of the governor's room; an' my belief is you've heard somethin' spesh'l, or you wouldn't be so bloomin' crusty at bein' asked a civil question.—Eh? You seem to me to be all of a fluster. I can see it in your eye.'

Matthew went on with his work without making any reply.

'I say, uncle,' continued O'Leary in a lower tone, 'have you heard anythin' good? Have you got your thumb on old Fely? I thought, when I came in, you looked as if you had. You'd better tell me all about it.—You won't, eh? All right, my dear sir; I'll find out.'

Just then the door of Mr Felix's room opened, and Lady Boldon came out, accompanied by the lawyer.

'You will permit me to see you to the railway station?' said Mr Felix, as they passed through the outer office.

'Oh, I could not think of occupying so much of your time; indeed, I have trespassed upon it too long already,' was Lady Boldon's answer, spoken graciously enough. In reality, she had a feeling that it would be safer, since her visit to the lawyer had been paid in secret, that they should not be seen together at the railway terminus, where people from Woodchurch might observe them.

Mr Felix saw that he was not wanted, and did not contest the point. He put Lady Boldon into a cab, and saw her drive away. But he could not return to the office. He wandered into the Temple Gardens, and remained there alone for more than an hour, speculating on the future. All his life he had been a solitary man. His existence had been always dull, often wearisome. Now, when he had ceased to hope that anything in the shape of romance would come to him, a new vista opened before him. The fire of passion had kindled in his heart; and to-day he saw plainly that, in order to gain the woman he loved, he must commit a crime. He was not appalled at the thought. Discovery was the only thing he feared, and that he thought he could avert. After all, there was not much risk. He gave free scope to his imagination, speculating on the possibility of concealing the new will in such a way that he might afterwards, if need be, pretend to discover it, and thus retrace the step he had taken. The real difficulty, he saw very well, lay not in the suppression of the will, but in getting Lady Boldon to consent to marry him in return for this service. He was not vain enough to imagine that she would marry him willingly. But he thought that if she would only consent to be his wife, he could compel her to love him, at least after a fashion. Oh yes! she would come to love him—there could be no doubt of it. And they would be rich. They would go to Italy, or the Riviera, and leave this squalid, fog-encircled city. It was a beautiful dream: the mere pleasure of dreaming it was exquisite.

Mr Felix left the Garden and went on the Embankment. There he stood, leaning on the parapet, and watching the great river flowing seawards at his feet. The old, old smile, so obvious that no one can miss it, recurred to

his mind. His life was like that river. He was being carried on with irresistible force. Whither? The end must be near.—The thought was insupportable. The old lawyer turned away with a bitter pang at his heart. He tried to recall the pleasant fancies in which he had been steeped for the last hour; but they would not come. The dream had vanished. Nought was left but a sense of emptiness and loneliness, and a vague dread of an approaching doom.

Meantime, Lady Boldon had reached the railway terminus. Her excitement had prevented her from feeling hungry; and she had not thought of going to a restaurant. She got a bun at the railway refreshment-room: that was all she had to eat during the day.

It was late in the afternoon before the train reached Woodhurst, and of course Lady Boldon had to walk home. She took the nearest way, through some meadows where the grass was wet with recent rains. Before she had been in the fields ten minutes her thin boots were wet through. She had undergone much fatigue since the morning; but she did not for a moment regret having gone to London. She had gained something, at all events, she told herself. Mr Felix had promised that, if he could possibly help it, she should not lose the estate; and she had gathered from his manner, rather than from his words, that he thought he could help her effectually.

When she reached the house, Lady Boldon found that her husband was no worse than he had been the day before, though not decidedly better. No one had called, except the curate. Mr Lynd, the nurse told her, had been sitting with Sir Richard for the best part of an hour. 'He asked for you, my lady,' said the butler.

'Who?' asked Lady Boldon sharply. Somehow, she found it difficult to fix her attention. She was shivering a little, and very, very tired.

'Mr Lynd, my lady,' answered the servant, allowing a faint surprise to appear in his countenance; 'and as you were not at home, he wrote a note for your ladyship, and left it on the library table. Shall I fetch it?'

'Yes—no; I will get it myself.'

In an instant her fatigue vanished. She walked swiftly into the library. A white envelope was conspicuous on a small writing-table. She snatched it up and tore it open at once. The sheet of paper inside bore only the words—'I did my best; I am sorry to say with no success.—S. L.'

Lady Boldon dropped into a chair, holding the curate's note clasped tightly in her hand.

'Shall I order dinner, my lady?' asked the butler, coming into the room.

'No; I don't feel inclined for dinner. I don't feel very well, Walters. Tell my maid I want her; and ask cook to send a cup of tea to my room. I can't eat anything.'

The maid soon saw that her mistress was suffering from a feverish cold; and she lost no time in sending for the nurse, who understood in a moment that she would now have two invalids on her hands instead of one.

All that night Lady Boldon tossed to and

fro, unable to sleep, at times slightly delirious. Towards morning, she fell into a deep slumber, and did not awake till past noon.

'How is Sir Richard?' were the first words she uttered when she awoke.

'Much the same, my lady,' answered the maid.

'Get me my dressing-gown; I will go and see him.'

'Beg pardon, my lady; but Dr Jackson saw your ladyship while you were asleep, and said you were very far from well, and were on no account to leave your bed to-day.'

'Nonsense; do as I tell you.'

But no sooner did she try to move, than she found out that the doctor was right, and that she was wrong. She was astonished at her own weakness.

'Mr Lynd is with Sir Richard,' said the girl, after a pause, 'unless he has gone by this time.'

Lady Boldon was not surprised. She knew that the curate was devoted to his work, and was specially active in calling on the sick. And her second thought was, that it was extremely fortunate for her that Mr Lynd and not the Rector was attending to her husband's spiritual needs. If her father and Sir Richard were to meet, it might come out that she had not been near the Rectory on the preceding day. That would undoubtedly have been awkward; but the Rector and the Squire were not likely to meet. They had had a little disagreement, just enough to make Mr Bruce unwilling to go to the Chase; and he was very pleased to let Mr Lynd take that duty off his hands.

'And a gentleman has come from London,' added the maid.

'From London! Do you mean Mr Felix?' asked Lady Boldon, the colour suddenly brightening in her cheeks.

'I don't know the name, my lady; but I'll inquire. I know he was brought from the station, and Saunders went to meet the up-train.'

'Yes; it is Mr Felix, no doubt,' she said to herself. What did he mean by coming to get the will signed so soon? Surely a little delay, if it could do no good, could have done no harm. Then she said to the maid, 'Who is answering the bell of Sir Richard's room? Fulton, is it not?'

'Yes, my lady.'

'Go down and tell him that if Mr Felix, the gentleman from London, asks for me, I am to be told at once. Remember that—at once. If he asks to see me, I must get up and see him. You understand?'

'Yes, my lady.'

The message was duly delivered; but the hours of the autumn afternoon went slowly by, and no one came to Lady Boldon's door to say that Mr Felix had been inquiring for her. She was anxious not to seem curious about his movements; but at length, in as careless a tone of voice as she could command, she put the question, and learned that the lawyer had been gone for the last two hours. He had been only a short time with Sir Richard, and, after a hasty lunch, had returned to London.

'What could I expect? Why should he wish to see me to-day?' said Lady Boldon to herself. 'But I must see him again before anything further is done—and I will.'

(To be continued.)

THE VOLCANOES OF THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

It is not the geologist alone who takes an interest in volcanoes. The extraordinary power displayed in their operations, the tremendous and awe-inspiring phenomena with which their eruptions are frequently accompanied, the devastation which their floods of red-hot lava and their deadly showers of ashes occasionally effect, all tend to awaken and to exercise the imaginative faculty in man. The ancients, with their love of personification, were content to represent them as the scene of some colossal struggle between antagonistic gods, or as the prison of some indignant deity; but the modern world looks at them differently, and if it could be done, would slice them into sections as a cook slices an onion, and so exhibit before our eyes layer by layer of their interior, showing their mode of growth and the constituents of which they are formed. Volcanoes are an attractive study, whether we view them as an active illustration of how the great part of the earth's crust was at one time laid down, or as a mere exhibition of natural magnificence and power.

Ten or eleven years ago Professor Judd published his able work on Volcanoes, which work formed the most important treatise on the subject that had till then appeared. According to him, the three essential conditions on which the production of volcanic phenomena seemed to depend were, firstly, the existence of certain apertures or cracks communicating between the interior and the surface of the earth; secondly, the presence of matter in a highly heated condition beneath the surface; and thirdly, the existence of great quantities of water imprisoned in the subterranean regions—which water, escaping as steam, gives rise to all those active phenomena which we associate with the existence of volcanoes. It cannot be said that subsequent investigations into the subject have made any essential change necessary in this statement of the conditions upon which volcanic phenomena depend; but our knowledge of the detailed working of volcanoes has been largely added to, and by none more so than the veteran American scientist, Mr James D. Dana, in his volume on the Volcanoes of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands.*

These islands, it need hardly be said, form a small archipelago in the North Pacific, and are known as the Kingdom of Hawaii, from the name of the principal island of the group. They are still, however, familiarly remembered by the name of Sandwich Islands, the name given to them by Captain Cook after Lord Sandwich, who was at that time First Lord of the Admiralty.

* 'Characteristics of Volcanoes, with Contributions of Facts and Principles from the Hawaiian Islands, including a Historical Review of Hawaiian Volcanic Action for the past sixty-seven years,' &c. By James D. Dana. London: Sampson Low.

alty. The islands were said to have been first discovered in 1542, and to have been rediscovered by Captain Cook in 1778, and there, in the following year, he lost his life, perishing at the hands of the natives. The islands appear to be wholly volcanic in formation, and are still the seat of the largest and most active volcanoes in the world. The two highest mountains, both volcanic, are Mauna-Kea and Mauna-Loa, in the island of Hawaii, being respectively 13,805 and 13,675 feet in altitude. On the eastern slope of Mauna-Loa is the marvellous crater of Kilauea, the largest active volcano existing.

This crater differs from such as that of Vesuvius in having no enclosing cone, being what Mr Dana calls a 'pit-crater,' that is, a crater surrounded mostly by vertical walls, and these walls made of the nearly horizontal edges of stratified lava-streams. 'The history of these volcanoes,' says Mr Dana, 'is such as has been supplied by no other volcanic region. Commonly it is the eruption that draws attention to the volcano; and the course of the flow, the characteristics of the lava, and the devastations of the fiery stream and the earthquakes, make up nine-tenths of all the published facts. At Kilauea, on the contrary, it is a history of the *inner workings* of the volcano; of the movements and changes that take place within the crater over the various parts of the great area where come into view the outlets of the subterranean lava-column; and of these events as steps in the line of progress from its emptied condition after a great eruption till ready again for an outbreak. In Vesuvius, the crater may be accessible for a time after a discharge; . . . but in general, long before the time of eruption, the vapours and cinder ejections make access to the bottom impossible. The crater of Etna is far away from habitations, and it has therefore had no regular series of interior investigations. Kilauea alone is always accessible.'

It is difficult, without a diagram, to give the reader an idea of what the immense crater of Kilauea is like. Its length is fourteen thousand feet, or very nearly three miles, and the breadth somewhat less. The form of the crater internally is peculiar. If one were to dig a little hole in the ground, roughly oval in shape, say three yards by two, and a foot in depth, then into the middle of this hole sink a large flower-pot till the rim was level with the bottom of the excavation—something like the shape of the crater of Kilauea would be obtained. When the crater is, so to speak, empty—that is, during the collapse that follows a great eruption—the height of the vertical exterior walls of the crater is something like six hundred feet. At this depth there is a more or less level platform, called the Black Ledge, all round the central pit, which pit is in its turn still from four to six hundred feet deeper. The great extent of the area covered by the crater, and the height of the surrounding walls above the bottom of it, afford excellent facilities for observation. Although the crater is so large, its level above the sea is not much over four thousand feet, or similar to that of Vesuvius. 'Even when the crater is ready for an eruption, it is safe to stand on the brink of the great pit and watch the boiling caldrons, and sweeping lava-floods, and violent but harmless

flowing-cones. The action of the liquid lavas is ordinarily so quiet and regular that all parts of the great open arena may be traversed with safety; and the margins of the fiery lakes, if the heat is not too great, may be made a sleeping-place for the night—with only this possibility, that the lavas may well up and spill over. This spilling over may be the sending away of a stream for a mile or two across the crater's bottom; but, standing a little to one side, it does no damage, and the next day the fresh lavas may be walked upon. Thus the crater may be followed in all its interior changes month after month. There is terrible sublimity in the quiet work of the mighty forces, and also something alluring in the free ticket offered to all comers.'

For the details and history of the observations which have been made from time to time on this and other of the Hawaiian volcanoes, by scientific men, missionaries, and travellers, we must refer the reader to Mr Dana's pages. The general course of the phenomena in the crater of Kilauea may, however, be stated. As already described, it has a pit within a pit—the lower pit when empty being about four hundred feet below the other. Eruptions on a large scale appear to have taken place about once in every eight or nine years. In the course of these eruptions immense volumes of lava are discharged, running for miles and miles across the island. Then comes the period of comparative quiescence, when the emptied crater begins once more to be filled. It would appear that the molten rock, heaved up from a great depth underground, gradually gathers in the lower pit of the crater, the bottom of which goes on rising till it reaches the level of the Black Ledge, when of course it has a tendency to spill over. This process takes some years. Then comes the time when, by the introduction perhaps of a stream of water after a rainy season into the underground sea of boiling rock, an eruption is brought about. The water reaches the molten rock through crevices and other openings in the earth, and when there, is immediately converted into vapour, which vapour expands, and by its expansive force causes great explosions, which explosions must of course find vent at the mouth of the crater, and so we have the mountain in a state of eruption—fountains of lava spouting hundreds of feet in the air, and covering the district around with its scorie and ashes and lava beds.

At other times the accumulated lava in the neck of the crater finds outlet by a subterranean passage, and in this way the crater is equally emptied. In the year 1868, there occurred one of these outbreaks and 'down-plunges.' It was preceded by a succession of heavy earthquakes, culminating on Thursday the 2d of April in a shock of terrific violence. With the occurrence of this great shock, fissures were opened from the south end of Kilauea south-westward for a distance of thirteen miles. Simultaneously with the violent shock, a decline began in the fires of Kilauea, and that very same night 'the liquid lavas had disappeared from all the cones and were confined to the lakes; by Saturday night all the lakes were emptied except the Great Lake; finally, by Sunday night, the 5th, the Great Lake had lost its lavas, and all was darkness and quiet. Where the lava went to is unknown.' A

subsequent observer, referring to this strange phenomenon, thus vividly describes it: 'Suddenly, one day, the greater part of the lava-floor sank down, or fell down, a depth of about five hundred feet, to the level where we now walked. The wonderful tale was plain to us as we examined the details on the spot. It was as though a top-heavy and dried-out pie-crust had fallen in at the middle, leaving a part of the circumference bent down, but clinging at the outside of the dish.'

A FEEBLE ATONEMENT.

'E's tipsy!' 'E's 'aving a rest!' 'What is it?' 'Only a sandwich-man!' One of the miserable gutter life had slipped and fallen on the Strand pavement. With the imperial air of the neophyte medicine-man, Talbot Villiers parted the crowd. A Samaritan stood by with a little brandy in a glass. Talbot put it to the human advertisement's lips. The man opened his eyes with a look of gratitude. The look touched the young medical student. He held up his finger for a cab, then he assisted the fallen man into it and took a seat opposite.

'Where to?' asked Talbot. 'Where do you live? I am going home with you.'

'Tallot Street, Westminster, No. 5,' murmured the other feebly. 'My name is Stern, John Stern.'

Talbot gave the direction to the cabman; then he examined his companion more closely. He was an elderly man of refined features. His clothes, though shabby, were remarkably clean, his linen was clean, and he was clean shaven. In fact, such a surplus of cleanliness in one of his late occupation was rather suspicious. Stern bore the young man's scrutiny with visible uneasiness. He leant suddenly over to Villiers.

'Sir,' he said, 'if you are going home with me, will you keep my carrying of the boards a secret? I don't want it to come to the ears of my daughter. I am pretty nearly useless for work; but I wish to help her all I can, and that is why I come into the City to carry those boards. She thinks I work at an office.'

'I quite understand,' said Talbot pityingly. 'Your secret is safe with me.' The words of the man had aroused every generous instinct of his nature. 'What made you faint?'

'Hunger,' replied Stern laconically.

Talbot made a hurried motion to stop the cab. Stern laid his hand on his arm, and restrained him. 'No, sir,' he said. 'I am indebted to you already. You cannot help me further; I cannot take anything from you, even food. But I thank you, all the same.'

Stern's tone was decisive, and Talbot regarded him in amazement. The first answer had showed him what little way he had made in medical diagnosis; the second, how little he knew of human nature. The pride that prevented a hungry man accepting food was to Talbot preposterous. This feeling gave way, however, to one of involuntary respect. At last the cab stopped. Cabs seemed a novelty in Tallot Street, for a face appeared at nearly every window. A girl of about twenty was

looking from No. 5. As the cab drew up, she turned very pale, and rushed to the door.

'My daughter, Kate,' said Stern. 'Remember your promise, sir.'

'All right,' replied Talbot; then, as the girl came to the cab door, he raised his hat. 'Don't be alarmed; your father has happened with a slight accident. He slipped on the kerb. He's all right; but I thought I had better drive home with him from the—the office.'

At the sight of her father walking from the cab, the colour rushed back to her cheeks in such vivid and delicate tints, and showed so clearly the beauty of her complexion, that Talbot stood gazing at her in silent admiration. His eyes lingered on her in a most embarrassing silence. They took in the lines of the slight graceful figure, the nut-brown hair, and the honest, steadfast eyes.

'I'll call to-morrow,' he said with a start, 'and hear how he is—that is, if you don't mind.'

It was evident that Kate regarded him as a junior member of some unknown and eminently Christian firm. 'You are very kind,' she said—'very kind indeed.'

'Don't mention it,' stammered Talbot.—'Good-morning—I mean good-afternoon—Miss Stern.'

He re-entered the cab, and telling the cabman to drive anywhere, escaped from Tallot Street in some confusion. But he was true to his promise. He called the next day, and the day after, and many more times. The state of Stern's health seemed to become a very serious matter. At last this pleasant fiction exploded. He came one afternoon when her eyes were weary with typewriting, and the sight maddened him. He clasped her in his arms. 'Kate, my own dear Kate,' he cried, 'I love you, and I want you to be my wife. Will you, Kate?'

Kate looked into his eyes. He needed no other answer; and they passed the afternoon building up a quiet little Bloomsbury practice. Stern was to be made a dispenser. Over the teacups, Kate told her father of Talbot's proposal. He kissed her, and sighed. It was not in him to spoil a love-dream; but he scented danger. Talbot Villiers was a gentleman in every sense of the word; but Talbot Villiers had undoubtedly a father. Who was he? Villiers, senior, would without doubt have his say, unless he was a very mild father indeed. Early the next day, a day when Stern had no 'copying' to do in the City, a letter arrived from Talbot enclosing two tickets for the theatre. The letter ran: 'I want you and your father both to see this piece. It was produced last night with the greatest success. After you have both seen it, I'll tell you why I am so anxious you should go. I have enclosed some press cuttings which will give you an idea of the plot and the way it is staged. I'm sorry I can't come; but I have a little business to transact with dad.'

It was the first time he had mentioned that ominous person. 'Dad' suddenly loomed up very large in Kate's thoughts. Villiers, senior, unaccountably depressed her. She tried to throw this depression off by telling her father about the theatre. The play was called 'A Woman's Love.' Stern had carried the boards

that advertised its 'first night.' To Kate's great astonishment, her father refused to go. She pressed him why.

'I can't go,' said Stern gravely.—'Don't look so grieved, Kate. Let me tell you why; then perhaps you will understand me. A long time ago I wrote a play'—

'You wrote a play!' interrupted Kate breathlessly. 'I knew, you dear, old father, you were clever. Talbot said you were clever. He said you had a clever face.'

Stern smiled sadly at this innocent tribute. 'Writing a play, Kate, and getting it acted are two very different things. I wrote this play in want, in misery, and with an ailing wife by my side. I wrote it in the odd moments snatched from my work. I built high hopes upon it, my dear; I put my whole heart into it, and I fondly dreamt it would lift from me a burden of debt and give me a name. I signed it with a *nom de guerre*, and sent it to a dramatist called Fielding Clark. I called upon him afterwards and asked his opinion of the play. He told me he had lost it. Then, Kate, I lost heart. Poverty drove me from pillar to post, and of the many things I grew to hate, the theatre was one.'

Kate threw her arms round him and kissed him. 'And to think but for that accident,' she cried, 'you might have been a great man! Never mind!'

'No,' said Stern, wearily passing his hand over his forehead, 'never mind.—But what have you got in your hand?'

'They are the press notices of the new play. They came with the tickets.'

'Well, my dear, I'm just going to have a pipe at the back of the house; I'll look over them. Perhaps I'll go, after all. You are entering soon on a new life, and it's about time I should throw aside my prejudices.'

He fondly kissed her, and took down his pipe. When her father was gone, Kate drew in thought to the window. To think how narrowly she had escaped being a dramatist's daughter! While her mind was thus exalted, she observed a gentleman of middle age attentively scanning the houses. He was not a prepossessing gentleman. He was dark, slimly built, and of a sarcastic aspect. At last he fixed his gaze on to No. 5, and opened the gate. With a vague misgiving, Kate ran to the door.

'Pardon me,' said the visitor blandly, 'but is this Mr Stern's?'

'Yes,' answered Kate, feeling cold, 'this is Mr Stern's.'

'And if I judge aright,' said the stranger still more blandly, 'you are Miss Kate Stern. May I have the honour of a few moments' conversation with you? My name is Barry Villiers.'

Talbot's father! The ominous 'dad' in the background! With a very pale face, Kate ushered him into the house. He politely waited for her to seat herself, then sat down.

'I fear,' he began, 'I have called on a rather unpleasant errand. My visit concerns a flirtation between you and my son.'

Kate caught her breath. 'There has been no flirtation, Mr Villiers. Your son has told me

that he loved me, and I am not ashamed of returning his love.'

Villiers bowed. 'A boy-and-girl attachment,' he said airily. 'I heard of it from my son's lips to-day. Of course it cannot proceed. It is folly; but then, when were lovers wise? I can assure you, Miss Stern, though fully appreciating your affection for my son, that you must give up all thoughts of this marriage.' He smiled.

'Give up all thoughts of it!' cried Kate, with pale lips. 'Is that your son's message?'

'No—of course not. I am here to reason with you. You are a mere child; I am a man of the world. We look at these things from different stand-points. But a marriage is impossible. Your position?—

'You mean,' interrupted Kate, 'that you are rich, and I am poor.'

'Exactly. In all other respects, you are no doubt my son's equal; but this unfortunate circumstance is sufficient to restrain me from giving my consent. I cannot see my son's prospects blighted. I am willing to pay any price'—

Kate's eyes blazed. The suave, insinuating manner of Talbot's 'dad' roused her. His way of putting a price on the affections brought back her colour. 'My price,' she said scornfully, 'for what? The love I bear him?'

Villiers coolly changed his tactics. 'Pardon me; I was wrong. I ought not to have made such a suggestion. But you say you love my son. Well, his career is in your hands. Will you blight it? It rests with you.'

'You are putting the whole responsibility of his future on my shoulders,' she answered bitterly. 'Is that the act of a gentleman? Is it the act of a father who loves his son?'

Villiers regarded her more attentively. His suavity diminished. 'You are more clever,' he said coldly, 'than I thought. I will say no more. If you take my friendly visit in this spirit, I can do nothing. But you may take it as my last word that if my son marries you, he does so a beggar. I cast him off; I utterly disown him.'

'And yet,' cried Kate, 'you say you love him!'

Villiers took up his hat; he fixed her with a keen, cold glance. 'I do. And here is my cheque-book to prove it. I will pay any sum to release him from a degrading marriage.'

'Degrading!' The girl staggered. 'I will prove to you,' she said in a quivering tone, 'which love is the strongest. I will give him up; I will tell him so from my own lips. And if ever you tell your son of this interview, you may say that I refused to marry him because I loved him. That is my answer.' She sank into the chair from which she had risen, and covered her face with her hands.

Barry Villiers's face lightened. 'My dear young lady, I have wronged you. Pray, make some allowance for a father's affection. Let me reward you for this act of self-sacrifice.' He pulled out his cheque-book and stood beside her, apparently considering the sum, when the door that led to the back opened and Stern walked in. He looked first at his daughter, then at Villiers. As their eyes met, something

like an electric shock seemed to pass from one to the other.

'Fielding Clark!' cried Stern.

Kate gave a start. Barry Villiers was Fielding Clark, the dramatist. Talbot's father was the author of the play for which they had received the tickets. She turned an amazed look upon her father. His face frightened her. It was exultant denunciatory. For a moment, Stern's face seemed to have the same effect upon Barry Villiers. He seemed disconcerted, ill at ease. In Stern's hand were the press notices crumpled in a ball. Villiers was the first to regain his composure.

'Sinclair!' he cried, 'John Sinclair. This is a surprise.'

Stern turned to his daughter. 'Leave us a moment, Kate,' he said. 'I have a few words to say to this—this gentleman.'

Kate rose, and with a wondering look at her father, quitted the room. When she was gone, he fixed a scorching look on Barry Villiers. That gentleman promptly held out his hand. Stern contemptuously disregarded it.

'I don't know why you are in my house,' he said slowly. 'But no doubt you can explain it. I should say you are a man who could explain anything. Perhaps you can explain this.' He held up the crumpled ball of paper. 'These are press notices of a play produced last night. That play was mine. You stole it. You are a liar and a villain!'

Villiers put down his hat. 'Sinclair,' he said, and his tones were almost plaintive, 'you will regret those words. Yet they were spoken in the heat of the moment, and I forgive you.'

His retort was so staggering, that Stern gazed at him dazed. He nearly apologised.

'No doubt,' pursued Villiers, 'you think the worst of me. It is not unnatural. But there are extenuating circumstances. I own the play was yours. I own I used it. But at the time you came to me it was really lost. I had mislaid it. I had no knowledge of your real name—I take it that the agreeable young lady who has just left us is your daughter—I had no means of reaching you. I sought for you, I advertised for you, under the name of Sinclair; but in the tide of London life you were swept away. Then, Sinclair—I mean Stern—I was tempted. There came to me the great temptation of my life. I was worked out; a manager stood at my elbow, and I took your play. It was culpable—very culpable; but the question is, what are you going to do in it?' He paused, and looked, not altogether without anxiety, at the man he had wronged.

Stern stood before him dejected. To a third party he might easily have been mistaken for the one who was most to blame. What was he going to do in it? The hot fire of vengeance had died from him. He stood now only with the cold ashes of lost hopes.

'Of course,' said Villiers, 'you could harm me, perhaps prosecute me; but it would be unchristian.'—Stern thought of the sandwich boards, and glared at him.—'Give me the opportunity,' he went on hastily, 'of making atonement. We are both middle-aged men. Why live in the past? Why should we cloud the happiness of others?'

'The happiness of others? What do you mean?'

'I'll explain,' said Villiers. 'You know me as Clark. Villiers is my name, and Talbot Villiers is my son. You may not have noticed the likeness. He takes after his mother.'

'Thank God!' cried Stern fervently; but the relationship troubled him.

'He loves your daughter. The match seemed to me an undesirable one, and I came here to-day to break it off. Now it is the dearest wish of my heart. Why should we blight their lives?'

Stern gazed at him amazed. Here was a fresh sophistry. Villiers had robbed him, and now held out a net for him. Stern's brain grew hot.

'I say "we," but of course I mean you. I have no power to do anything. You have the power. If you are so unchristian as to expose me, you do so at the price of their happiness, at the price of youth and innocence. You shall have all the money I took for the play. —I may be a villain,' said Villiers with a virtuous burst, 'but I have a conscience. This is a feeble atonement, Stern; call it, if you like, the beginning of one; but do you accept it?'

Stern could make no reply. The desire for vengeance had fled; but in its place was a dull longing for justice. Then he thought of Talbot, of the afternoon in the Strand. 'Go now,' he cried hoarsely. 'I want to think this over. I'll send you my answer.' He walked, as if he were carrying the sandwich boards, into the shadow of the room and sat down on a chair.

Barry Villiers stood in the sunlight. He gazed anxiously at Stern, and was about to open his mouth, when his eyes fell upon the door of the inner room. It had opened, and Kate Stern stood on the threshold. With a smile of relief, the man of the world bowed, and went out of the front door. Kate approached her father and laid her hand on his shoulder. Stern looked up, and saw the traces of recent tears. He kissed her; and then love conquered both the desire to reinstate himself, and be quits with the man who had robbed him. 'My dear,' he said, 'you shall marry Talbot.'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

CARBONADO is the name given to a form of crystallised carbon which is too black and opaque to be reckoned as a diamond. It is, however, a most useful substance, for its extreme hardness enables it to cut into any other substance known, and it is largely used for tool-points. Set in the 'crown' of a drill, these black diamonds are employed for piercing holes through rock, often to immense depths. A rival substance of artificial preparation has been produced by Mr E. G. Acheson of Philadelphia. He calls it Carborundum, and it represents a compound hitherto unknown to chemistry, a mixture of one atom of carbon with one atom of silicon. These elements are

combined in the electric furnace, and the resulting new compound, it is believed, will rank with the most valuable abrasives known.

An Hungarian chemist, Dr Johann Antal, is said to have discovered an antidote to prussic acid in the nitrate of cobalt, the efficacy of which has been proved to demonstration. Unfortunately, the poison named is of such a powerful nature—that is to say, so rapid in its effects—that there is in the majority of cases no time to get an antidote, even were one at hand. The nitrate of cobalt, too, is not easy to obtain, for it is not comprised in the drugs of our pharmacopœia.

The occurrence of what is known as ball-lightning is so rare, that every instance of it is of some interest. The *Lancet* lately described a narrow escape from death by this form of lightning, which was experienced by a distinguished surgeon of Louvain, who had gone to visit a patient in a neighbouring town. He was overtaken by a thunder-storm, and what he described as a ball of fire descended upon and rendered him for some time unconscious. On coming to himself, he found that the cloth of the umbrella which he had been holding was completely burnt off its steel framework, the metal being twisted into every shape. He attributes his safety to the circumstance that the umbrella has a wooden handle; had it been of metal, he must have been instantaneously killed.

During the late Dundee whaling expedition to the Antarctic regions, certain fossils were collected which formed the subject of comment at a recent meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Professor Geikie pointed out that all the genera to which the specimens belonged were now living, and had a wide distribution, and that the only conclusion which could be drawn from them was that the Antarctic sea must have once existed under far more genial conditions than the present.

Some very interesting experiments, explaining the nature of bullet-wounds, were shown at a recent lecture, by Dr Victor Horsley, at the Royal Institution. He pointed out that, after certain Continental wars and outbreaks, the wounds exhibited such characteristics that one side had charged the other with employing explosive bullets. He then showed that a magazine rifle bullet in passing through a sheet of half-inch iron first telescoped itself, so as to make a hole of larger diameter than might be expected, and then tore away the metal from the further side of the target. By firing a bullet into damp clay, he was able, by filling up the hole with plaster of Paris, to get an exact cast of the path of the bullet, which represented in shape not a tube, but a bulbous opening the shape of a Florence flask. The damper the clay, the larger the space ploughed out. The conclusion at which he arrived was, that the magazine rifle, however effective it might be, was certainly not a humane weapon.

A somewhat unnecessary fuss has been made over the various methods of stopping bullets, which have suddenly been evolved by inventive brains. The upshot of these experiments seems to be what most of us knew before, that bullets from modern rifles can only be effectually

stopped by targets which are either too weighty or bulky to be available as part of a soldier's equipment. But a use for the bullet-proof cuirass may yet be found, if we may believe a statement regarding certain rifle experiments which took place lately at Zwickau in Saxony. Twelve infantry soldiers armed with small-bore rifles and using hard-cased bullets, were ordered to fire simultaneously at a brick wall two and a half metres high and about forty centimetres thick, at a distance of three hundred metres. At the ninth volley the wall fell a heap of ruins. It would be interesting to know the composition of the brick, and whether a jerry builder had been employed to erect the wall.

In the last Soudan war we heard much of an armoured train which served at night-time to keep the marauding Arabs in check. An improved appliance of the same nature has been proposed for home coast-defence, and some successful trials of it have recently been made in Sussex on the railway line which skirts the coast. The armour-clad vehicle is about the size of an ordinary luggage van, and it contains a forty-pounder gun and wheeled carriage mounted on a turn-table, so that the muzzle can be pointed in any direction. The wheels run on inclined rails so as to reduce the recoil, and special appliances have been employed to prevent any injury to the permanent way. This armour-clad defence forms a striking contrast to the old martello towers which still dot the coast of Sussex at intervals of a quarter of a mile.

A few years ago there was a great outcry in this country for technical education. The demand has been met, and technical schools have sprung up in all parts. One of the most recent is that opened at Cambridge by Lord Kelvin, who prophesied great results from the attachment of such a department to the university. He urged that it was a great benefit to the world at large that her engineers should be able to secure a university education, and not be mere skilled artisans. The head of the new engineering laboratory at Cambridge is Professor Ewing.

In the Tilbury and Southend Railway (Essex) a sparrow's nest containing eggs has been found between the bottom of one of the carriages and the Westinghouse brake. The carriage has been in constant use.

In a recent paper on Liquid Fuel, read before the Society of Arts by Mr G. Stockfleth, it was stated that this method of firing was used for domestic purposes in some of the houses at Baku. The apparatus was simple in the extreme. A tank near the top of the house contained the oil, which was led by half-inch tubes to the various stoves. Each stove was provided with a small cast-iron disc or plate, placed in front of the stove door, which is pierced with a small opening, so as to create a strong draught. Upon this plate the oil slowly drips, and when once the metal plate is warmed and the supply of oil regulated, it burns without any further attention. The oil employed is the residue from the petroleum, after the more volatile elements—gasoline, benzoline, kerosene, &c.—have been driven off by distillation.

Chlorine for bleaching purposes has hitherto been supplied commercially only in the form of chlorinated lime, or bleaching powder, commonly known as 'chloride of lime.' This product contains, however, when at its best, only about thirty-eight per cent. of chlorine gas. A firm of alkali-makers at Salindres have, however, recently set up an extensive plant for making liquid chlorine, and for supplying it commercially in steel cylinders under pressure, in the same way that carbonic acid and nitrous oxide gases are already supplied. The machinery required is of a peculiar construction.

An investigation has recently taken place with a view to testing the suitability of aluminium boats for service in the United States Navy as a substitute for those made of the heavier metals, iron and steel. The outcome of this inquiry is a Report which determines that aluminium can be used for small boats, and for steam-launches under certain conditions of service, and recommends that a trial boat be made for experiment. It is possible to build boats of ample strength and of less weight than wooden boats of the same size, but the metal is liable to be damaged by collisions against sharp projections, such as the edges of piers. The Report goes on to point out that the only way in which aluminium boats can be made better than iron boats in withstanding the hard knocks of actual service is by increasing the thickness of the metal.

Dr Huxley of Maidstone advises that those who suffer from insomnia should try a remedy which is at once simple and effectual. This is to curl the body up beneath the bedclothes so as to reduce the amount of fresh air. 'Lower the supply of oxygen in the blood,' he says, 'produce a little asphyxia, breathe and re-breathe only the respired air; you will then reduce the stimulating oxygen, and fall asleep. There is no danger. When asleep, you are sure to disturb the coverings and get the fresh air. When the cat and dog prepare to sleep, they bury their noses in some hollow in their hair, and off they go.'

Messrs Spalding & Hodge, the well-known papermakers, have introduced a grease-proof parchment which they call 'glassine.' It is very transparent, and its chief use is as a protective covering to valuable books, through which all details of binding and title can be seen.

In an article contributed to the *United Service Magazine*, the Rev. T. G. Sheppard, chaplain to the 25th Infantry, United States Army, gives some interesting facts relative to the efficiency of the coloured man as a soldier. There have hitherto been four regiments in the American army which by law have employed coloured troops. It is now proposed that the practice should be extended, and that batteries of coloured men to serve in any or all of the existing artillery regiments should be enlisted into the service. Since the close of the civil war, in which the coloured soldier won such honourable distinction, he has been mostly employed in exacting frontier service, and has manifested on many occasions both skill and bravery. As a rule, the coloured troops are quite as hardy as the whites, even in cold

climates, while they exhibit a slightly lower death-rate.

Eighteen feet below the present level of the City streets lies Roman London, as the discovery of many tessellated pavements, fragments of pottery, &c., has long ago proved. But modern London is gradually pushing itself far below the Roman remains, an instance of which will presently be seen in the position of the Central line of railway, which will lie at a depth of eighty feet. It is curious to note that at the point where the railway will emerge from beneath the Thames, it will, in its passage up Queen Victoria Street, pass beneath the main sewer, which already runs beneath the District underground railway; so that there will be here an enormous sewer sandwiched between a steam railway and one worked by electricity.

Visitors to London who are interested in engineering matters should not fail to pay a visit to the Machinery section of the South Kensington Museum, where model steam-engines and other mechanical appliances, of both obsolete and modern build, are shown in action. As most of these models are in glass cases, steam would be out of the question, and they are therefore worked by compressed air. In many cases, the visitor can himself turn on the air-supply by pressing a button on the outside of the case, an exercise which is by no means neglected by the numerous boys who find delight in this novel Museum.

The adjacent Imperial Institute, which is now well furnished with specimens of the products of our various colonies, is also well worthy of a visit. We note with interest that photographs are largely employed in these galleries to lend additional interest to the exhibits. In this way, tea, coffee, orange culture, &c. can be followed through all their details from gathering to packing. For some weeks a fine collection of ceramic and glass ware has been exhibited in the Institute, some of the articles shown being superb as examples of artistic manufacture. Among other novelties, Messrs Doulton & Co. show specimens of what they call their metallo-ceramic process, which is a method of effectively joining metal to china which is likely to meet with many useful applications.

The uses to which paper is put are manifold, and, according to report, it is now being employed in the form of yarn in the body or backing of carpets. It is said to be superior to some of the more usual backings employed, and that more than half a carpet may consist of paper without the inexpert buyer suspecting it.

The slaughter of wild animals in South Africa has of recent years been carried to such excess that certain mammals, such as the giraffe, zebra, eland, &c. will soon, unless protective measures are adopted, become extinct. In order to counteract this indiscriminate killing, a Committee of British sportsmen and naturalists has been formed, says the *Zoologist*, with a view to devise some protective scheme. They propose to obtain from the British South African Chartered Company permission to enclose a tract of country of about one hundred thousand acres in extent in the district near

Fort Salisbury. This would be strictly reserved for game. A park of a similar kind, covering twenty-eight thousand acres, was established some time ago in New Hampshire, United States, America, and the scheme has proved an unqualified success.

The ingenuity of an inventor has actually supplied a labour-saving device to the billiard table. This consists of an arrangement by which pocketed balls do not remain in the pockets, but make their way to a central receiving-cup below the table, whence they are delivered at the will of the players to either 'the baulk' or the 'spot' end, as convenience may require. It has often been stated as one great advantage of billiards that the players engaged have a vast amount of walking exercise. It is evident that this part of the muscular exertion will now be greatly reduced, without, as far as we can see, any corresponding advantage.

A controversy has arisen out of a statistical statement compiled by a London vestryman which shows that the total attendances at certain public baths during the past four years give a preponderance of male bathers in the proportion of seven to one female. From this it is foolishly argued that men are cleaner than women. The comparison is by no means a fair one, for among the male bathers are included those who attend the swimming baths. This they do for exercise and learning to swim, certainly not for the purposes of cleanliness. The statistics are gathered from a well-appointed bath under parochial care, and it is interesting to note that although the figures show an average of more than a hundred thousand bathers annually, the maintenance of the establishment entails a yearly loss to the ratepayers of five thousand pounds.

Physicists seem to be still very much in the dark as to what constitutes a healthy or unhealthy atmosphere. Thus, Dr Petrie has examined no fewer than a hundred samples of air from a Berlin sewer, and has found them perfectly free from noxious organisms. If the results of these experiments may be relied upon, and if bacteria really cause the deadly consequences ascribed to them, a sewer must be a far healthier place than a heated reception room. It has, however, been urged that sewer-air possibly contains poisonous chemical substances capable of exerting very mischievous effects. From recent researches by M. Christmas at the Pasteur Institute it would seem that ozone has not any antiseptic effects in air unless it exceeds in quantity one-tenth per cent., and that long before this limit is reached, the air becomes irrespirable.

A Report by the Hydrographer to the Admiralty, dealing with the work done during the past year in examining and charting seas and coasts in various parts of the globe, shows how necessary for the protection of shipping is this useful undertaking. No fewer than 201 obstacles to navigation have been recognised and charted, these, for the most part, consisting of sunken rocks and shoals. Of these, 26 were reported by the ten surveying vessels; 35 by others of Her Majesty's ships; 22 by various British and foreign vessels; 105 were reported

by foreign and colonial Governments; while 13 hidden rocks were detected by the very conclusive evidence of vessels which struck upon them.

THE ACCUMULATION OF GOLD.

WE live in a record-breaking age, and are becoming so accustomed to hear strange facts, that we no longer express wonder at them. The announcement, therefore, some weeks ago, that the amount of Gold held by the Bank of England exceeded anything previously recorded, and the fact that since then it has gone on increasing, has not aroused any very special attention, particularly as there is every probability of a further influx. The nearest approach to the existing state of affairs was in 1879, shortly after the City of Glasgow Bank crash, when then, as now, confidence in commercial circles had so broken down that many people were only happy when they knew their money to be safe in the Bank of England. Most of the surroundings, however, are now entirely different. There has been no great financial crash and no sudden loss of confidence. For upwards of three years, however, things have been slowly going from bad to worse, almost every enterprise, however promising, and in whatever part of the world it has been entered into, has proved unsuccessful, and the great commercial community has lost all heart and all hope, as well as a considerable amount of its money. The object now is apparently to save something from the wreck; and where English money invested in foreign countries is at all gettable, it is being brought home for safety.

We are consequently threatened with a 'flood of gold.' For years we have been told by those who ought to know, that bad trade and declining prices have been principally owing to the scarcity of this precious metal, and yet, with a superabundance, trade gets worse, and prices appear to have no bottom. Recent experience of the over-supply of most articles of produce has been a sad one, yet an over-supply of gold appears to act contrary to all the recognised rules of political economy, otherwise gold would also become depreciated; or, in other words, articles measured by gold would advance in value. We may rest assured, however, that if a natural law is apparently suspended, it can be only for a period, and must, sooner or later, assert itself. It is therefore absolutely certain that the great accumulation of gold which is now taking place, and which is being constantly added to by the increasing discoveries in South Africa, will at no very distant date lead to revived business activity, and a fresh outburst of speculation.

There are many circumstances at present existing propitious to such a movement. The outlook for a continuance of peace, and an absence of disturbing political rumours, has rarely been so bright, and there is indeed a prospect of some reduction in the enormous expense annually incurred in maintaining the immense Continental armaments. There can be no want of confidence, therefore, on that ground. But further, the great distributing classes in

the country have on the whole done exceedingly well of late, inasmuch as they have been purchasing at continually declining prices, but not making a proportionate reduction to the general public, who, finding almost every article of necessity remarkably cheap, are not disposed to grumble. But seeing that nearly every purchase effected can be made cheaper than the one before, they have been extremely cautious in their dealings, and bought only sufficient for actual requirements. The consequences have been twofold—first, either an accumulation of money in the hands of the wholesale dealers and the larger shopkeepers, which, for want of better employment, has been left in the bank, and helped to swell the existing large reserves; or what amounts to much the same thing, the requirement of much less assistance from their bankers, where they have been accustomed to make use of over-drafts or discounting facilities. And in the second place, by the depletion of invisible stocks, caused by the determination to work their businesses with the smallest ones possible, and to replenish quickly when necessary. Thus the large visible supplies of various important articles of consumption are extremely misleading, and due solely to the fact of unequal distribution; while the importer or original producer is indisposed to unduly press sales so long as the cost of carrying, owing to ridiculously cheap money, is so small. Once confidence is felt that the price of any article has about touched bottom, there will be a rush on the part of retail houses to go into stock, and with increasing demand and decreasing supplies, values must eventually be affected.

One great factor remains which has never played an important part in any previous trade revival. To what extent will the low price of silver retard it? We have to face the competition of the East and silver-using countries generally, as well as those where a depreciated paper currency is in circulation, to an extent hitherto unknown; and as present prices to all such peoples are by no means unsatisfactory, the resistance to any upward movement may at first be serious. But the universal belief that abundance of money means high prices is based upon a very solid foundation. The money, however, must be honest, and not, as is too often the case, manufactured by Governments for the purposes of inflation and speculative manipulation.

With an abundance of honest money, therefore, whether gold or silver, prices must eventually rise in the countries which possess it. It has been largely owing to the scarcity of the former, and the superabundance of the latter, that the depression in the gold-standard countries has been so great; but some adjustment in the production of the two metals now promises to relieve it. It is true, if silver remains at its present low gold price, the values of everything produced in silver-using countries will be difficult to raise; but it is extremely probable that floating supplies of this metal are rapidly disappearing, and will not long weigh heavily upon us. It is true the stocks throughout the world are gigantic, and must long remain a source of uneasiness; but inasmuch as they are almost entirely under Government control,

there is no fear of any sudden opening of the flood-gates. It may be fairly assumed, therefore, that with the slightest incentive, the value of silver will improve, and in that case the most serious drawback to a general revival will be removed.

The improvement foreshadowed may not happen to-morrow, next month, or even next year, nor is it possible to say what will give it the first impetus. Probably some trivial and unimportant event for the moment entirely overlooked, but of sufficient consequence to turn the current into a healthier channel. It may be somewhat delayed; there will probably be more than one false start; but its advent within no very long period is a certainty.

MEADOW-TREASURES.

ALL along the meadow ways
There are treasures growing;
Some with living gold ablaze,
Some like rubies glowing.

Pearly daisies 'crimson-tipped';
King-cups leaning over;
Gleaming gorse-bloom golden-lipped;
Rings of scarlet clover.

Blushing poppies shyly bent
'Mid the long wheat lances;
Agate bean-flowers rich with scent;
Speedwell's sapphire glances.

Milkmaids of the marshes born;
Stately ox-eyed daisies;
Golden clouds amid the corn,
Wrought of sharlock mazes.

Open roses on the brier,
Matchless tints revealing;
Broom with blossom all afire,
Harebell buds concealing.

Woodbine chalices that rear,
Curled in airy lightness;
Spreading elder boughs that wear
Bloom of snowy whiteness.

These are spread throughout the land,
Free for every comer,
Scattered by the stintless hand
Of our regal Summer.

SAM WOOD.

*. TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.
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